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ABSTRACT

This collection of 12 articles, prepared by the editors of the weekly newsletter "Education USA," attempts to highlight significant new developments that have surfaced as major education issues. The aim of the collection is to provide "an authoritative, up-to-date report on what's new in education in one book." The articles cover such topics as the Nixon Administration's attitude toward education, performance contracts and education vouchers, PPBS (Program Planning Budgeting Systems), results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, pass-fail grading, child care centers, informal schools, community schools, and student militancy. (RT)

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The Shape of Education for 1971–72

VOLUME 13

A Handbook on Current Educational Affairs

By the Editors of EDUCATION U.S.A.

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This is the 13th volume of *The Shape of Education*. Prepared by the editors of *Education U.S.A.*, the weekly newsletter on education affairs, the 1971-72 *Shape* highlights significant new developments that have surfaced as major education issues.

Shape's goal: to pinpoint key issues in concise, understandable language; to give busy educators an authoritative, up-to-date report on what's new in education in one book; and to provide the education profession with a reliable source book for speech and news writers.

Since it was founded in 1958, *Education U.S.A.* has introduced new dimensions to educational journalism in the United States. It sifts education news each week from hundreds of sources, selects the most significant developments and reports them clearly and concisely. The *Washington Monitor* section of *Education U.S.A.* is a current report on activities at the U.S. Office of Education, on Capitol Hill and in other federal agencies involved in education.

In addition to *Education U.S.A.* and the annual edition of *Shape*, the editors develop special in-depth reports on major current issues in education. Recent Special Report titles include: *Environment and the Schools; Federal Aid: New Directions for Education in 1970-71; Vocational Education: Innovations Revolutionize Career Training; Preschool Breakthrough; Reading Crisis;* and *Differentiated Staffing in Schools.*

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—The Editors, Education U.S.A.

Nixon and the Schools: An Analysis

Education and the Nixon Administration have been living together through troubled times—and neither seems to quite trust the other.

The relationship has been featured by almost constant turmoil, confusion and misunderstanding. The U.S. Office of Education (USOE) has suffered from ever-changing leadership, "new" priorities replaced by newer priorities and constant reorganization—creating a climate which at times has nearly demoralized many USOE career professionals.

Additional confusion has been created by the Administration's determination to "reform" the tangle of legislation pushed through Congress by the Johnson Administration. The Nixon goal: (1) to bring order out of what the Administration and many school administrators believe is near chaos caused by more than 75 different legislative titles, grants and programs which often overlap; (2) to give far greater flexibility in decision making to the state and local level. Hailed by most educators as a long needed priority, the Nixon plan immediately ran into trouble when its details were released in the Education Special Revenue Sharing Act. Why? Because it really provided

no new or additional funds, it proposes to channel all funds through the governor and it does not require state and local planning for utilization of funds.

The demoralized condition of USOE during the first two years of the Nixon Administration was easily recognized by informed observers, and the condition was readily admitted by insiders who were often eager to call national attention to their plight.

The problems facing USOE leadership have been outspokenly voiced by two men who experienced them firsthand: James E. Allen, former U.S. commissioner of education, and James J. Gallagher, former HEW deputy assistant secretary for planning, research and evaluation.

Allen is particularly critical of political considerations given to USOE appointments by the White House. "Equally frustrating," Allen said, "was the inordinate delay in the clearance (of appointees) which would usually stretch into months. Such partisan political influence is accepted as a condition of employment, a fact of life in the federal government, but for it to be of such paramount concern is unfortunate in the field of education."

Gallagher's analysis charged that USOE is ignored and given "only perfunctory recognition" by the Administration. In a scathing 13-page "statement of personal conviction," he outlined his reasons for quitting. He cited second-guessing by the White House and the Bureau of the Budget as a major reason for erosion of USOE authority. He noted that the agency had only "limited participation" in White House policy statements on school desegregation, higher education and educational research and development.

"One of the consequences of that limited participation was the negative tone in the White House messages on education which appear more critical than constructive in their approach to education," Gallagher stated.

Gallagher said it was a "distinct shock" to learn that "fiscal considerations and budget technicians often determine major educational policy decisions." He said his first inkling of this trend came when the Bureau of the Budget cut $15 million from the Administration's initial 1971 budget requests for existing research programs while allowing "modest starts" for new

programs. He implied that the Administration's much publicized search for "what works" in education, including the establishment of a National Institute of Education, may be a smoke screen for future budget cutbacks. "Such a move could be accompanied by lofty statements of 'exciting new advances in research,' when, in fact, the total educational research money available may show little or no increase," Gallagher said.

Continuing his analysis, Gallagher said "there are simply too many persons, some at quite low levels in the hierarchy, who have the power to change the signals." He recommends that 20% of the education budget be set aside annually for long range, high priority programs.

Both Gallagher and Allen said a separate Dept. of Education would be a solution to the present awkward linking of the "three unlikely companions" that form the Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare. Gallagher said this would eliminate the difficulty education has of competing for its share of a single HEW budget. While USOE's budget exceeds that of five Cabinet departments, he noted that education's share in HEW's budget has dropped from approximately 33% to 18% over the last six years. "In real dollars," he observed, "our 1971 budget level was below our budget back in 1966." Unless the federal government resolves to keep its educational promises, it may be "crying out for educational reform on the outside, when the needs for reform may be greatest on the inside of the federal establishment," he concluded.

Many top management people now in USOE believe their agency is facing one of the greatest challenges in its history—how to be an effective agent for better education under the Nixon Administration. This is the climate that faces U.S. Comr. of Education Sidney P. Marland as he tries to firm up his leadership position in the long-rudderless USOE.

Insight into the problems and challenges facing Marland and USOE is disclosed in an analysis by Samuel Halperin, a former HEW deputy assistant secretary for legislation in the Johnson Administration. Halperin's views are especially significant because they reportedly represent the thinking of key officials within USOE.

The White House wants Marland to assume the role of a "creative manager" who can come up with a plan whereby

USOE, with funds at about the current level for the next several years, "will spark the discovery of what is best in the nation's schools." Halperin said. "Then . . . USOE would seek to 'leverage' those practices into schools and colleges." Thereby, Halperin says, "USOE would become much more than a money dispensing machine. . . ."

Numerous difficult problems and hurdles confront Marland as he attempts to achieve this White House goal, Halperin says. Here are some samples: He and his staff must build relationships of mutual confidence with HEW Secy. Elliot L. Richardson and his key personnel; he must convince the Office of Management and Budget and the President's Domestic Council that "new leadership at USOE possesses the intellectual and administrative vigor to effectively advance the goals of the Administration"; he must recruit more personnel to ensure program effectiveness—USOE's budget has increased ninefold in the past decade while the number of personnel has only increased from 1,061 to 2,669; he must achieve "a massive redeployment of the present staff" to gain "a major streamlining of staff functions" and to cut paper work; he must spend much of his time in legislative development and in presentations on Capitol Hill; and he must get along with "a host of educational constituencies" and a Congress controlled by "the other political party." The Halperin report adds ominously: "The weight of problems facing the new commissioner is such as to discourage all but fools and courageous men."

On the legislative front, the Nixon Administration is stirring waves with its "special revenue sharing" plan. The concept strikes at the very core of favorite Democratic party achievements of the Johnson Administration's "Great Society" program, thus creating a major confrontation between the White House and the Democratic majority in Congress which wants tight controls over the money it appropriates. As a result, the Nixon plan is given little chance of becoming a reality before 1973. But educators who know the political realities in Washington are convinced the plan will become a major political issue as the Presidential campaign of 1972 approaches.

In a nutshell, the plan would cut most of the federal strings now controlling the expenditure of federal education dollars. It would provide little, if any, new money, but it would establish

a radically different way of spending current funds. Critics fear it gives too much power to the state governors.

Here are highlights of the proposal:

- More than 75 different legislative programs, including the entire Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), would be reduced to five broad areas of federal support—(1) vocational education, (2) assistance to schools in areas affected by federal activities, (3) compensatory education for the disadvantaged, (4) education of handicapped children and (5) education support services.
- States would be permitted to shift as much as 30% of each category allocation to another category—the only exception is the allocation for compensatory education, which must be spent in its entirety to help disadvantaged children.
- Each state would be encouraged to develop, but not submit to USOE, a plan of how it would allocate its federal school funds. Each state would also be asked to develop a systematic public review of the plan in its own state.

One of the most controversial proposals in the plan would affect school districts receiving impacted aid. Support for these schools would be greatly reduced by a provision which places all funds for category "B" children—those whose parents work for the federal government but live outside the government installation—into each state's special revenue sharing pool for spending in any of the five categories of school support. The plan continues the current comparability requirement for Title I, ESEA, funds. To be eligible for Title I under the comparability ruling, local districts must spend as much per pupil from state and local funds in schools in poor neighborhoods as they spend in schools in more affluent areas. An earlier version of the plan called for freeing 70% of Title I funds from the comparability guidelines, but this idea was dropped from the final proposal.

The Council of Chief State School Officers has set the tone of concern about the plan with a series of resolutions: (1) All funds in the program should be "directed to and administered by the state agency" presently responsible for elementary and secondary education, thus making it impossible to bypass state departments of education. (2) Federal funds should supplement

and not supplant state and local funds. (3) States and local districts should not be permitted to reduce their level of school support.

Many critics point out that the term "special revenue sharing" is a misnomer since the proposal is entirely one of providing simplified operation of the present categorical grants by repealing most of the education legislation of the last six years "in one fell swoop." But despite numerous complaints, most education leaders agree that the plan is a step in the right direction because it would eliminate much of the red tape at state and local levels.

The Administration is countering criticism of the plan with a selling approach keyed to a perceptive understanding of the frustrations facing school administrators today. Here is a sample from a "revenue sharing" speech delivered by a USOE spokesman at a series of briefing meetings held to explain the plan: "The local school superintendent would no longer be faced with trying to keep track of a staggering array of programs under which his district might benefit. He and his staff would be freed from the onerous task of making separate applications and writing elaborate proposals for grants under each of these programs, and, after the grant is made, spending long hours accounting for expenditures of funds under each of the many different programs. Timely funding would be assured under a proposed provision in the new law that all federal funds be appropriated one year in advance."

These are persuasive arguments for school administrators. If moderate corrections are made along the lines suggested by CCSSO, if Marland's hopes for major boosts in federal support of education are forthcoming and if Marland can bring order and a new spirit of service to USOE, the Administration may yet win over the suspicious education community, say informed Washington observers. The Congress, however, is quite another question. And it is there that the final decision on the Nixon plans will be made.

How To Save School $$

Consider one of those incredibly successful carry-out chains whose hamburger, fried chicken, pizza or sparerib franchises are proliferating across the nation. Suppose the chain allowed each franchiser to choose any location he wished and to look around on his own for money to build his facility. What if the franchiser had to purchase his own equipment and food supplies, and operate without ever communicating sales and cost information to the chain headquarters, which in turn would never offer any technical help?

You don't have to be a Colonel Sanders to realize that a chain operation could not survive if it did not pool resources to build and buy and did not exert quality control over its franchisers and their product.

While school systems are not in the business of dispensing snacks and soft drinks, they rank among the nation's largest economic enterprises at the local, state or national level. Nonetheless, many districts often operate along chaotic and inefficient lines that would ruin any other budgeted enterprise, according to many businessmen. If the state education agency is viewed as the chain headquarters and individual school districts as the franchisers, the parallel with the disastrous carry-out industry holds.

Critics claim school districts often locate new school buildings within their geographical boundaries according to narrowly

conceived development plans, totally unrelated to what neighboring school districts are planning or to the needs and population projections of the state as a whole. Individually, school districts go to voters or their local governments to obtain authority to enter the money market—also on an individual basis—to get the capital funds they need for construction. They then contract, again individually, with architects and builders. Carrying the parallel even further, critics charge that school districts often deal on their own with suppliers of textbooks, equipment and foodstuffs, buying in most cases relatively small quantities of goods and foresaking the cost benefits of mass-volume purchases.

At the state level, the educational agency often has little control over the local districts and receives hardly any useful information from them. In turn, the state agency has little to offer in the way of expert advice or services, critics claim.

The carry-out analogy can also be turned around as an argument against cost efficiency and centralization of the educational system. Just as many people abhor the impersonality and uniformity of the quick-food chains with their mass-dispensed products, no one wants an educational system that robs schools or communities of variety and individuality and substitutes a packaged model.

For decades, citizen groups and educators have been aware of the chaotic nature of the educational system. Despite some advances, such as school district consolidation and local financial data requirements for state aid grants, most of the alleged inefficiency and duplication has been excused as the necessary price paid for a constitutionally protected autonomous and decentralized system.

But critics and many educators believe the time for change may be at hand. Several factors, they say, make this likely: the taxpayer "revolt," the accountability movement and the advent of revenue sharing.

With most tax levies and bond issues facing only a 50% chance of passage these days, school districts are having to argue their financial cases more convincingly. The public demand for a more precise accounting of results for the dollars spent is leading school districts to disclose achievement tests results, evaluate teachers and consider performance contracts.

So far, the movement toward accountability is largely a local phenomenon, but it may take hold at the state level if revenue sharing becomes a reality. Pouring federal money back into the states will greatly increase the importance of the state educational authority as a distribution agent and should lead to a closer examination of its performance and capabilities.

At the state level, one of the most meaningful attempts at self-appraisal is a study issued by a task force of 31 business executives commissioned by a state-supported council to look over school management practices in Massachusetts. If modern management techniques were accepted and applied, and if the state improved its education department at an annual investment of $1.1 million, the businessmen estimated that upwards of 6% to 10% annually, or as much as $100 million, could be saved in school costs.

At the city school district level no such comprehensive study has been undertaken. But, among the more promising ideas for putting a leash on at least one of every urban district's runaway costs, that of paying for sites and construction of new school buildings, is the approach called joint occupancy. Already a reality in several school districts, joint occupancy envisions combining schools on the same site with other community facilities, and most importantly, incorporating on the site commercial space or housing which draws an income and eventually could help pay off construction and land costs.

In Chicago, a real estate entrepreneur is building a school within a racially and economically integrated housing project and plans to lease the school to the city school board. Private schools in both New York and Philadelphia have tied their construction plans to profit-making commercial apartments and retail ventures.

In New York City, for example, 23 new schools will be constructed in the next five years, all of them eventually to be paid for with income produced from commercial buildings constructed in high rise structures above the schools.

The New York project was made possible through establishment by the state legislature of a public authority called the New York City Educational Construction Fund. The fund issues its own bonds, pays off its debt with income derived from its commercial tenants, then eventually turns over the land and

school to the city which can continue to receive income from the property. The best commercial customers on the school site are considered to be either middle- or upper-income housing units or a high rise office building. A private developer is chosen by the fund to construct both the school and commercial facilities.

The first construction fund project is a combined 1,200-student elementary school, P.S. 126, and a 400-unit middle-income housing project, Highbridge House. The $3.5 million school comprises the lower floors and the $10 million housing unit rises above it. The school's roof, spreading beyond the housing tower, will be used by residents for recreational purposes. Separate entrances for school children and apartment dwellers are provided.

Another New York City Educational Construction Fund project, planned to achieve a greater degree of interaction between the school and the commercial portion of the project, is Central Commercial High School.

The state and the city agreed that the fund would take over the site of an old National Guard Armory, build a $15 million commercial high school and lease air rights above the school for construction of a $14 million office tower. School officials envision a full-fledged school and business partnership with students getting firsthand experience in the business firms and the businesses benefiting from a readily accessible part-time working force. Air rights rental income plus a payment to the construction fund in lieu of taxes are expected to pay off the debt.

The Massachusetts task force report also dealt with school construction financing problems, but from a different vantage point. Looking down the road to future reforms, the task force suggested that the state take over from local districts all contracting for and construction of public school buildings by creating a new state school construction agency. Such a state agency could develop a program of modular design for building new schools, using common architectural plans, thereby cutting down on architects' fees, and purchasing building materials in large quantities.

More immediately, the task force urged two new approaches for cutting down one of the most inflationary costs of school

construction and negative voter reaction—the interest rate on loans. Each school district, the task force noted, individually floats its own bond issues for new school construction. With the exception of a few large cities, most of the school districts have lower credit ratings than the state. Consequently, they pay higher interest rates on the money they borrow.

If the credit rating of the state could be used by the districts, the task force estimated at least a 1% average reduction in bond interest rates could be procured, amounting to a yearly saving of $1 million. Several approaches were suggested by the task force, including Vermont's formation of a bond bank that buys bonds issued by communities. It then floats bond issues using the state's credit rating.

Even greater savings could be realized, the task force found, by a wholly new method for financing construction by local schools. The method could be implemented without new legislation or creation of new state agencies. Traditionally, school districts finance new school construction by long-term borrowing in the open market. Through conventional borrowing, a $3 million school, for example, financed over 20 years at 6%, costs about $5 million. Almost $2 million of the amount goes to interest charges.

The task force suggested creation of stabilization funds that would produce considerable savings on school construction finance charges. If a school system planned to build four schools, costing $3 million each, over a 24-year period, the cost minus 40% of state construction aid would be about $14.7 million with a 6%, 20-year bond issue.

Instead, the task force proposed that money should be raised for each school before the school is constructed through a fund that would continue for the life of the school construction program. Such a fund would draw accelerated state aid and interest income as it accumulates capital. The task force estimated up to a 70% long-range savings and lesser savings if combination bond issues and stabilization funds are used.

Besides new approaches to financing school construction, the task force produced a myriad of other suggestions. Individual school districts should centralize their food services, improve their preventive maintenance programs, utilize the Planning, Programming, Budgeting System approach (see page 47) and

plan in five-year increments, the task force said. Cooperatively, school districts should combine their busing operations, purchase supplies on a statewide basis and move toward consolidation of smaller school districts.

The task force also recommended that the state department of education, aided with an infusion of $1.1 million annually to hire professional staff and support new programs, develop a statewide information system for educational data, meshing with similar local systems. It also recommended that the department form a state trusteeship to handle group health and life insurance for all school and city employees in a single package.

While most of the suggested reforms received general approval, several task force recommendations brought an angry retort from the Massachusetts Teachers Assn. The teacher group viewed a proposal that principals and assistant principals be excluded from bargaining units as an attempt to cast administrators in a management role. They called the proposal for a health and insurance package a "corruption of collective bargaining procedures," denying local teachers their right to bargain for programs fitting their particular needs.

Like most educational reforms, those proposed by the Massachusetts Business Task Force for School Management have not swept through the state's educational system. But, follow-up task forces have been established, legislation is being introduced and examined in hearings and many taxpayers are waiting to see how long it takes the system to move toward what they consider "sensible economies."

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'Contracting' Faces Big Test

Performance contracting is the first real live offspring of the accountability concept in education. It was born in August 1969 in Texarkana and had a serious childhood disease (teaching to the test) the next spring. It survived—though the disease might yet become chronic—and hit the rapid growth period of adolescence in the academic year 1970-71. Some 36 districts in 21 states negotiated performance contracts involving more than $10 million. (Published estimates have run as high as $150 million. They are reportedly exaggerated.)

Whether performance contracting will multiply and spread next year—or ever—depends to a considerable extent on whether federal funds continue to be available. Further, some guides and evaluations are on the way. Such think tank giants as the Rand Corp. and the Battelle Memorial Institute are now monitoring certain federally and locally financed experiments. Last February the State Dept. of Public Instruction in Indiana declared illegal the most bizarre of all performance contracts, the four-year contract between the Gary (Ind.) School Board and Behavioral Research Laboratories (BRL) of Palo Alto, Calif. BRL took

over the entire operation of a public school in Gary. However, when BRL promised to make necessary changes, the state rescinded the order.

What is performance contracting? Texarkana is a good example of it. The Texarkana demonstration started with a $270,000 grant from Title VIII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the brains of Charles Blaschke, a Washington-based consultant who since then has developed Education Turnkey Systems, Inc. Blaschke took seriously the theories of accountability propounded by then-Assistant Comr. of Education Leon Lessinger. At the same time (spring 1969), Blaschke was advising two adjoining Texarkana school districts, one in Texas and one in Arkansas, on their desegregation-compounded high school dropout problem. With Blaschke's help and the federal money, district officials prepared a "request for proposals" to deal with the problem by giving remedial instruction to 400 students, grades 7-12, who tested two or more grade levels below national norms in reading or math. One of the smallest firms bidding, Dorsett Educational Systems of Norman, Okla., won the contract. One of its unique features—something entirely new in education—was a sliding scale of payments, to be determined by student performance on standardized tests.

Acting quickly, Dorsett set up six "rapid learning centers." Students reported to the centers for two hours a day instead of going to their regular math and English classes. The center's teaching machine was the primary instrument of instruction, although students occasionally worked through programmed materials with paper and pencil. Managers of the centers and their aides assigned programs, administered progress checks and tutored anyone who seemed to be having trouble. The Dorsett program leaned heavily upon "extrinsic" motivation. For completing lessons successfully, students earned S&H green stamps. For one grade level increase, as shown by post-tests, they got a transistor radio. The student who posted the greatest increase over a given time period in each center won the biggest prize of all, a portable TV set.

Title VIII requires objective measures of effectiveness. Thus, the Texarkana project was subjected to an "educational audit" by an independent evaluation team. The first press reports suggested "startling gains" in reading and math skills. The figures

were based on pre- and post-testing with the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills.

The Texarkana success story bombed in June 1970. Pupils still in the program in the spring were the hard-core underachievers. The Hawthorne or novelty effect was fading. The programmer, Dorsett's sister, desperate for software that would teach apathetic youngsters of low IQ, started feeding items into the teaching machines taken directly from the Iowa Tests. A youngster bored with the repetition complained to a school official while taking the post-test. Thus came the charge of teaching to the test. The upshot was that Dorsett received only $105,000 of the $135,000 maximum he could have earned before payments stopped. The Texarkana districts persuaded Educational Development Laboratories, a division of McGraw-Hill, to take over the second year of the project.

The two essentials of performance contracting were both present in Texarkana: (1) A local board of education determines the area in which it wants special help and turns over the management and operation of a segment of the schools to an organization which contracts to provide that help. The organization does not have to be a private firm; it can be a group of teachers. (2) For a fee, the organization guarantees a certain measure of student achievement.

Before the Texarkana scandal broke, the experiment's excitement and alleged success caught the attention of Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) officials who were looking for ways to attack poverty in America. Thus, in 1970-71, OEO involved some 30,000 students in 20 school districts in performance contract experiments. Called a Performance Incentive Remedial Education Experiment, the project had a total budget of $5.8 million, not including $525,000 for Blaschke's firm to provide management and a cost-effectiveness analysis. For another $610,000 the Battelle Memorial Institute of Columbus, Ohio, is administering pre- and post-tests and assisting OEO in analyzing results.

Performance contracting operations exhibit a wide variety of approaches and programs, including the following:

Savannah, Ga., schools contracted with the Learning Foundation, using Emergency Assistance Act desegregation funds to raise 1,000 students one grade level in reading in 90 days for a

cost of $100 per pupil. There was no payment for any student who did not attain that level.

The state of Virginia contracted with Learning Research Associates (LRA) to conduct projects in seven schools. LRA guaranteed to raise student performance in reading 1.7 grade levels in 150 hours of instruction. Maximum cost, $85.50 per student. Virginia is the first state to embark on performance contracting.

Dallas, Tex., is concentrating on 960 students ranked in the lowest quarter of its classes in five high schools. A New York firm, New Centuries, has guaranteed that the students will make more than a year's growth in reading and math. The Thiokol Chemical Corp. has a contract to teach vocational skills and "motivation." Dallas is also experimenting with a project where incentive pay will be tried in one school (a $500 bonus to teachers and principal) for a certain level of achievement. In a second school the same program without bonuses will be used. A third will serve as a control.

Philadelphia had the largest performance contract in a single school system in 1971, although Dallas' multiple contracts rival it. Behavioral Research Laboratories is trying to improve the reading ability of 14,500 elementary and 500 junior high school students by at least a year. The firm will get $700,000 if successful.

Providence, R. I., is using $145,000 in Model Cities funds for a performance contract in reading for 1,500 students in four public and two private schools.

Flint, Mich., is trying to improve the reading of 2,160 ninth and tenth graders through a $210,000 contract with Learning Consultants, Medina, Ohio.

Portland, Ore., schools made a performance contract double-or-nothing bet with a large number of the district's teachers. In the summer of 1970 the teachers undertook to double the normal reading gains of students in a five-week summer program. If they failed, no pay. All students, according to press reports, made "impressive gains." Some teachers made $1,325 for the five weeks.

Duval County, Fla., which has one of the OEO contracts, has also contracted with Learning Research Associates to achieve gains of at least half a grade level in four months among

300 first graders. It is one of the few programs covering a wide range of subjects: reading, writing, math, social studies and science.

Open Court Publishing Co. has received a good deal of publicity for offering a basic reading program to schools with a written guarantee that it works. Charges are made in proportion to the program's effectiveness. Similar performance guarantee plans are being considered by other textbook publishers.

In the spring of 1970 a great deal of attention focused on the "ultimate" performance contract written for Gary, Ind., where last fall the Banneker Elementary School—inner city, 850 students—was handed over to Behavioral Research Laboratories. This project involves more money (over $2 million), more responsibility (an entire school) and a longer time (four years, counting the evaluation period) than any performance contract yet written. But the Banneker program is in deep trouble and illustrates a number of the ills that may beset performance contracting. The Gary Teachers Union charged that, despite contract provisions for monthly student evaluations on a profile of basic skills, no profile had been issued in the first four months and "BRL was still teaching only reading and math all day long." The Indiana School Boards Assn. said the contract splits administrative authority illegally. The Dept. of Public Instruction identified a host of violations of state regulations, e.g., improperly certified teachers, materials not approved by the State Textbook Adoption Commission, teacher-pupil ratios above legal limits, and a heavy dose of reading and math in violation of regulations about time allocations for a well rounded curriculum.

In the second full year of performance contracting most of the major professional associations have spoken out. Opposition of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) was first and strongest. In a resolution adopted at its 1970 convention, the AFT called for a nationwide campaign opposing performance contracting. Grounds for this action were the arguments that performance contracting: (1) lets private industrial entrepreneurs determine educational policy, (2) threatens to establish a monopoly of education by big business, (3) threatens to dehumanize the learning process, (4) sows distrust among teachers by a structured incentives program, (5) promotes teach-

ing to the (standardized) test and (6) subverts the collective bargaining process.

The National Education Assn. (NEA) took its first official position in December 1970, cautioning NEA affiliates "not to become parties to a performance contract without careful prior planning and consultation." The NEA statement notes that contracts presently in effect are subject to "potentially serious abuses." Affiliates are urged not to sign a performance contract until nine conditions are met, including these: Teachers must be involved in every phase of the contract from planning to evaluation; pupils must be under the supervision of professionally trained and certificated personnel; programs must be limited to "genuinely innovative approaches that are neither likely nor possible within the school's program"; and contracts must not be in conflict with negotiated agreements between school boards and local associations and must not violate the established legal rights of teachers.

The American Assn. of School Administrators was somewhat less negative in the resolution it passed at its February 1971 convention: "When school districts contract with commercial organizations for part or all of the educational program, the results obtained may appear to be the desired one, although it is all too likely to be specious."

The really important friend of performance contracting is the Nixon Administration. U.S. Comr. of Education Sidney P. Marland, who was involved in performance contracting in the private sector before he joined the U.S. Office of Education, supports performance contracting—and other approaches intended to introduce change into the public school in partnership with private industry. The reason is clear: Marland and the Administration want a low-risk, low-cost vehicle for school experimentation and they think performance contracting may be the answer.

Assessment Finds Surprising Ignorance

Is it worth its large cost? What have we learned that can improve our schools? Why did we fear it?

These are the questions educators and the public are asking as they ponder the first results of ability and knowledge surveys conducted by the once-controversial National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a testing program that has already cost the federal government and foundations $8.4 million.

Release of the first results in July and November 1970 caused hardly a ripple of public reaction—only a flurry of press articles for a few days and then silence. No public outrage—or even a whisper of dissatisfaction, for that matter—emerged to demand that the schools go to work on weak points disclosed by NAEP.

Despite public apathy, educators are busy studying the voluminous NAEP reports to see if they can find any messages useful to them. They have discovered, for example, that the NAEP surveys lay bare some startling lapses in what young Americans know and, perhaps more important, how they think.

Results of the initial subjects tested—citizenship, science and writing—disclose what many observers consider surprising ignorance of basic government structures and processes, of basic Constitutional rights, of names of well known political figures, of simple mathematical problems and of fundamental facts in

ecology and other scientific topics. Furthermore, answers to some test questions reflect a lack of simple ability to use reasoning or to use common sense. Although the Education Commission of the States (ECS), the agency administering NAEP, has deliberately avoided interpreting or evaluating the results, educators, political leaders and laymen have offered numerous reactions. Most of them have centered on weaknesses in what students aged 9, 13 and 17 and young adults know and can do.

One of the most interesting questions involved ecology—and an ability for simple reasoning. The answers disclosed what many observers believed was an alarming lack of reasoning power. Here is how the question was put to a national cross section of young people: "In a particular meadow there are many rabbits that eat the grass. There are also many hawks that eat the rabbits. Last year a disease broke out among the rabbits and a great number of them died. What of the following then occurred?" Common sense alone would suggest that the loss of rabbits would mean less nibbling inflicted on the grass and fewer meals for the hawks. Yet only 68% of the 17-year-olds and 52% of the young adults realized that the grass would grow taller and the hawk population would decrease. No less than 20% and 30% respectively thought neither grass nor hawks would be affected by the rabbits' death.

Answers to a simple math-reasoning question depressed many observers. As one observer said, one would expect that almost anyone with a modicum of high school education could answer this question: "A motor boat can travel five miles per hour on a still lake. If this boat travels downstream on a river that is flowing five miles per hour, how long will it take the boat to reach a bridge that is 10 miles downstream?" Yet, only 54% of the 17-year-olds and 56% of the young adults gave the correct answer: 60 minutes.

Insights into the effectiveness of education programs are also being gained from studies of these results: only 16% of the 13-year-olds, 44% of the 17-year-olds and 57% of the young adults could name one senator from their state; only 11% of the 13-year-olds, 35% of the 17-year-olds and 39% of the young adults could name the congressman from their district; only 2% of the 13-year-olds, 9% of the 17-year-olds and 16% of the young adults could name the secretary of state; 29% of the 17-

year-olds and 27% of the young adults thought a state has more senators than representatives if it has a large population; 66% of the 13-year-olds, 72% of the 17-year-olds and 73% of the young adults indicated "an awareness of religious discrimination in the world"; 83% of the 13-year-olds, 77% of the 17-year-olds and 67% of the young adults said they would be willing to live next door to a person of a different race; 92% of the 9-year-olds and 98% of the 13-year-olds knew that babies come from their mothers' bodies; 89% of the 13-year-olds and 95% of the 17-year-olds could identify a balanced meal; 41% of the 17-year-olds and 45% of the young adults know that the placenta carries nourishment to the unborn baby.

Results of citizenship surveys disclosed that large percentages of the nation's school-age youngsters and young adults do not understand or value some basic Constitutional rights. The least understood or valued right is the freedom to express controversial or unpopular opinions. When asked whether three controversial statements about religion, politics and race should be allowed on radio or TV, 94% of the 13-year-olds, 78% of the 17-year-olds and 68% of the young adults believed they should be banned. Among the best understood rights was that of protection from unreasonable police search. The correct answer was given by 20% of the 9-year-olds, 68% of the 13-year-olds, 90% of the 17-year-olds and 84% of the young adults.

Fifty-four per cent of the 17-year-olds and 61% of the young adults queried thought they could personally influence government. Although the majority in both age groups could name at least one way to influence government, only 11% of the 17-year-olds and 8% of the young adults could give as many as five ways of doing it—voting, talking to government officials, addressing public meetings, etc.

Results of the writing assessment disclosed that the skill of young adults tended to decline after high school years. The tests found that only 28% of the 9-year-olds could include all the information needed to address an envelope correctly; 50% of the 17-year-olds, compared with only 38% of the young adults, could write an acceptable description of an automobile accident after studying a conventional accident diagram; and 75% of the 17-year-olds and 57% of the young adults could write acceptable directions for making or doing something.

Reactions to the results were offered by speakers and two panels of educators and laymen at the annual meeting of ECS in Denver. Here are some of their comments:

- The results seem to reflect a lack of ability to use reason or common sense.
- We must do a better job of pointing out discriminatory practices.
- Since knowledge of government seems to decrease from the federal to the local level, it appears that teachers are failing to teach about grass roots government.
- The 9- and 13-year-olds did best on things they learned outside of school.
- Curriculum designers are assuming that pupils know more than they do.
- The 9-year-old does not have the knowledge in science that is expected of him, indicating that many primary teachers are avoiding the subject.
- The results show that the knowledge and learning skills of students and young adults are greater when "textbook" information is reinforced by practical experience.

Although many informed observers are increasingly uncertain about NAEP's influence on improving education, and some are beginning to mutter about "wasting millions of federal tax dollars," intense interest has been aroused in utilizing NAEP instruments at state and local levels for comparative assessments. To facilitate this interest, the ECS Steering Committee approved the following resolution at its 1970 meeting in Denver: "Be it resolved that ECS offer to serve its member states (42) as a resource in assisting states in the development of state assessment programs, including the adaptation of the NAEP model, with the understanding that costs of such resources would be met by requesting states; and that the ECS provide to state education agencies at their request and at cost, specimen sets of published NAEP items appropriately packaged, together with a manual of instructions, scoring keys, administrative tapes and whatever assistance is necessary in advising on their duplication and use." This resolution was passed following a request to ECS by Florida for permission and help to conduct a statewide and local assessment of the state's 67 school districts.

Although the ECS resolution appeared to open the tide gates to spread the use of NAEP instruments throughout the

country, Frank B. Womer, NAEP director, believes the rush of states and local districts to get on the bandwagon has been slowed. He says Florida, which was ready in the summer of 1970, is having second thoughts. Womer says he told Florida superintendents the cost at the local level would be "terribly high," but it would be feasible at the state level. Cost for the entire program in Florida—statewide and all local districts—has been estimated at $12 million per year. Other states reported to be interested in using NAEP material at the state level include Michigan, New Hampshire, Oregon, North Carolina, Colorado and Delaware.

NAEP officials appear eager to cool ardor for their program because they seriously question its feasibility at the district level. Pressure to spread the program, they admit, comes mostly from political leaders who want a single testing instrument to compare states and local districts with national results—and NAEP's program seems to them to be admirably suited for such use. When the program was first proposed seven years ago, educators feared its results would inevitably be released school by school, district by district and state by state, thus providing specific comparisons. To alleviate these fears, NAEP's leadership promised to release assessment results only on a national and regional basis. They said they would not conduct local and state assessments, and they believe the Steering Committee's action is not inconsistent with this promise since local and state assessments would not be conducted by NAEP. When asked if he thought some educators would feel double-crossed by the Committee's action, Oregon Gov. Tom McCall, former ECS chairman, offered this blunt reply: "I really don't care."

In addition to science, writing and citizenship, assessments are under way or being planned for reading, mathematics, art, music, writing, social studies, career and occupational development and literature. Each subject will be reassessed in three- or six-year cycles.

REFERENCE
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Are Grades Failing?

An institution almost as old as school itself may be on the way out. It's the institution of grading—A-B-C-D-F, 1-2-3-4-5, and variations on the theme.

All across the country report cards are under attack. In the cacophony of debate that seems to go on perpetually these days regarding education, some of the roughest language is being reserved for the conventional grading systems.

The criticism comes from inside as well as outside the establishment. The Assn. for Supervision and Curriculum Development calls grade cards "a cramping, distorting system . . . a nuisance to good teaching and learning" that has turned our young people into "an ant-pile of scramblers." The National Assn. of Secondary School Principals contends that grades have been used as an instrument of punishment in nearly 40% of U.S. high schools. John Holt, ex-Boston teacher and author of *How Children Learn* and *What Do I Do Monday?,* denounces the system as one which gives some students "the ignoble satisfaction of feeling they are better than someone else."

William Glasser, the psychiatrist who wrote the widely discussed *Schools Without Failure,* says report cards only measure the ability to memorize, not to think, and ought to be abolished. Moreover, he argues, a child who is tabbed a failure will think of himself as one and will act like one. As if to prove Glasser right, Ernest Priestley, a Seattle teacher, tells of assigning a theme to his English classes during his first year on the job.

He graded the papers and returned them. A week later he assigned another theme, and when he graded those papers he made an interesting discovery. The students who had got A's and B's the first time around improved on the second assignment. Those who got C's and D's did worse. "This experience and others like it . . .," said Priestley in an article in *Changing Education,* "have convinced me that the only good grade is a good grade. Good grades do children good, bad grades do them harm. Most grades are bad grades."

Sidney B. Simon, professor of education at the U. of Massachusetts and one of the most vehement critics of grading, sees four things wrong with grades: (1) They separate students and teachers into "two warring camps," (2) they "over-reward the wrong people," (3) they "destroy what learning should be all about" and (4) they debase "a student's estimation of his own worth."

Calvin Grieder, professor of school administration at the U. of Colorado, adds: "Most of us fail many times in our personal and working lives. Yet schools and colleges are the only place (save for the courts) where people are formally and in writing branded as failures, and the record stands for life."

But doesn't the grading system—whatever its defects—help to prepare the child for the realities of life . . . the competitiveness of our system? Admittedly there are inequities in grading. But there are inequities in the grown-up world that a child should learn to adjust to and cope with, argue proponents for retaining the grading system.

Simon answers the competition argument angrily: "Sure, life is competitive, at least if you are in the business of selling storm windows or aluminum siding. . . . Nevertheless, the skills of cooperation actually dominate a sane man's life much more than do the skills of competition. . . . The point is, we don't have to teach competition; the beast in us is instinctively competitive. But we had better do more thinking about how to help ourselves become more civil so that we develop some range of responses beyond 'What's in it for me?' "

The alternative to grades? Simply no grades at all, say many educators who have tried out the idea and are convinced that it works. There are variations on this theme also. Instead of grade cards, some schools send home progress reports de-

scribing in depth and detail Johnny's progress measured in terms of his ability, diagnosing his strengths and weaknesses.

At Bellevue, Wash., six days are reserved in November and again in February for parent-teacher "information exchanges." Each parent gets at least a half-hour to talk with the teacher about how his child is doing.

Los Angeles experimented with parent-teacher conferences instead of grade cards for 43,000 primary students. A subsequent survey showed parents favoring the new system by 25 to 1. As a result, the board gave all elementary principals in the city the option of doing away with grade cards for younger students.

Evergreen School at Whittier, Calif., sends home a report saying that a pupil has mastered a subject or is still learning it. Says Richard Hartley, the principal: "Learning itself, not the attainment of a grade, is the goal."

Inevitably, the total abolition of grades is taking place more in elementary than in high schools. The latter fear that the lack of grades will hinder the graduate's admission to college. However, some are experimenting with a pass/fail alternative. Longmeadow, Mass., High School tried it with a limited number of students and reported that "we are all very pleased with the results." The Niles Township Community High Schools at Skokie, Ill., also tried it and found, as one system official reported, "that students do not reduce their motivation when taking courses on a pass/fail basis." Some research studies, however, have indicated the reverse.

Some college admissions officers continue to be wary of high school pass/fail plans. Conventional grades, they say, are still the best predictors of success in college and thus the soundest basis for deciding who gets admitted and who doesn't. If high schools move en masse to pass/fail grading, the colleges may move to greater dependence on college-board tests.

Even so, many colleges have themselves swung away from grades and over to pass/fail. In fact, according to two national surveys, about two-thirds of the country's universities and colleges are using some form of pass/fail grading, and about half of the remaining one-third are considering it. Yale, for instance, is now pass/fail all the way. The U. of California at Santa Cruz opened its campus in 1965 with total pass/fail and has seen no reason to change.

Is this system a hindrance to getting into graduate school? Well, members of the first "ungraded" graduating class at Santa Cruz went on to Harvard Law School, Oxford U., and the U. of Chicago.

A dubious note is interjected, though, by an Ohio U. study which suggests that college students in Ohio do less well in pass/fail courses than in others. Regular grades were given to students and were then converted to pass/fail grades in the registrar's office. Students' grades in pass/fail courses were found to be about one full grade lower than their grade-point averages.

This would probably evoke an "I told you so" from educational traditionalists, who still regard with profound disapproval the trend away from grades. The Council for Basic Education, in its monthly *Bulletin*, said bluntly, "We favor grades, with all of their shortcomings. Parents have a right to know how their children are doing in school. No system achieves this perfectly, but many do a reasonably good job."

Robert A. Feldmesser, research sociologist with the Educational Testing Service, contended at the 1971 meeting of the American Educational Research Assn. that grading—at least on the college level—serves too many useful purposes to be abandoned. Grades serve an evaluative function that cannot be served, or served better, by some other form of evaluation, he said. He added that grades enhance learning and are helpful to graduate schools, administrators and employers. Teachers take fewer pains in evaluating a student's work in a pass/fail course than when letter grades are required, he said.

And Fred M. Hechinger, taking the long view in an article on the subject in the *New York Times*, said: "Anti-grading cycles are usually followed by a return to more competitive approaches. These hold that human nature requires, if not a stick, then at least a carrot to offset the natural tendency to avoid unpleasant exertion."

Even the carrot without the stick, though, holds little if any attraction for the more adamant critics of grading. Professor Simon probably speaks for most of them when he says, "Let's face up to what grades do to all of us, and banish from the land the cry, 'Whad-ja-get?' "

Nation Indicted For 'Vast Neglect'

Americans like to think of themselves as a people who pay a lot of attention to their children. But the 1970 White House Conference on Children sponsored by President Nixon went out of its way to shatter "the myth that this is a child-oriented society." The 3,700 delegates who came to Washington, D.C., Dec. 13 to 18, 1970, from all parts of the nation were uncompromising in their indictment of America's "vast neglect of its children." They called for a reordering of national priorities so that children and families come first. The once-a-decade conference established priorities that may be expected to set trends in education and social welfare for the 1970s. Some will become major policy goals for the Nixon Administration.

The conferees' top 10 recommendations, certain to be pushed by various educational and community groups in the years ahead, were:

- Provision for an opportunity for every child to learn, grow and live creatively by reordering national priorities.
- The redesigning of education to achieve individualized, humanized, child-centered learning.
- Establishment of citizen community action groups to implement these recommendations.
- Reforming the justice system to emphasize prevention and protection.

- Requiring legal and other accountability of individuals and agencies responsible for providing the rights of children.
- Establishment of a child advocacy agency with full ethnic, racial, cultural and sexual representation.
- Providing a federally financed national child health care program which assures comprehensive care for all children.
- Providing consumer-determined, publicly funded programs of family life, sex and population education and voluntary family planning services, and making safe abortion available to all.
- An immediate and unequivocal commitment by the President to enforce legislation to end racism and discrimination.
- Establishment of a Dept. of Education with Cabinet status, backed by a National Institute of Education.

Among the "overriding concerns" listed by conference members was a fear that adults and children are growing increasingly apart in our society. One forum brought to the surface many of these misgivings. Urie Bronfenbrenner, chairman of Cornell U.'s Dept. of Psychology, who headed the group, observed that in today's world parents do not have time to be parents. The fight against poverty, the forum's report noted, robs many parents of the energy needed to be "a stable source of love and discipline" for their children. The picture is not much brighter for affluent parents. Often the father's job keeps him away from home at mealtimes, evenings and weekends. This often means that the children of the family spend "more time with a passive babysitter than a participating parent." Even when the family spends time together, the report noted, the all-pervasive television set "casts its magic spell, freezing speech and action and turning the living into silent statues."

To help society work for rather than against children and families, forum members advised: "We must change our national way of life so that children are no longer isolated from the rest of society. We call upon our institutions—public and private—to initiate and expand programs that will bring adults back into the lives of children and children back into the lives of adults. It means parent-child centers as opposed to child development centers. It means breaking down the wall between school and community. It means new flexibility for schools, business and industries so that children and adults can spend

time together and become acquainted with each other's worlds at work and at play. . . ."

A "Sesame Street" style program for parents was proposed in another forum. "The overall effect would be to help parents not only enjoy being parents, but to show them the importance of their role as good parents."

A forum on day care and early childhood education recommended that the federal government fund comprehensive child care programs which would be family centered, locally controlled and universally available. Family members should participate in developing and carrying out these programs, the forum advised.

A massive increase in trained professional child care workers is necessary if adequate day care is to become a reality, the forum noted. It called for at least 50,000 additional child care workers to be added annually over the next decade. A complete child care program should also include training for parenthood in the public schools. Such a program should include both boys and girls, should start before the junior high school level and should give students opportunities for direct experience in day care centers.

Another forum, concentrating on "Confronting Myths in Education," attempted to topple what it defined as some "obsolete assumptions and ill-founded beliefs" about schooling. They included: "children have to go to school to learn," "teachers know and children don't" and "schools prepare children for the future." The forum recommended that experimental schools be created as part of a massive assault on the status quo in American education. The forum report proposed a more imaginative use of existing resources rather than a reliance on vast sums to bring about reform. Under its plan, schools free of all regulations would be established within existing systems, with perhaps 10% of the students being allowed to transfer to these units.

"Participation . . . would be at the option of parents and students," the group emphasized. "No one would be required to attend . . . and no program would be initiated without local support." The goal: to "turn on" many of today's "turned-off" generation of students. No additional money would be required, but some legislation would be necessary to "free these schools from present regulatory constraints," the report suggested.

However, another forum exploring "The Future of Learning" took a different approach. It called for a "massive infusion" of government funds to develop experimental schools, to reconstruct existing schools to apply known innovations and to create learning options outside of present education systems. Led by John Goodlad, dean of UCLA's Graduate School of Education, this forum scored the "monolithic conformity and enormous resistance to change" of present-day schools.

It said the top agenda item in seeking to enhance learning in the seventies should be unshackling the schools. "The process must begin by decentralizing authority and responsibility for instructional decision making to individual schools," the forum report advised. The forum recommended that substantial federal funds be allocated for the development of experimental schools which would serve as an alternative and provide options for parents. Such schools need not be within "the system," the report pointed out. It praised the diversity offered by "free" schools springing up around the country.

This forum urged that schools be given support for "abolishing grade levels, developing new evaluation procedures, using the full range of community resources for learning, automating certain kinds of learning, exploring instructional techniques for developing self-awareness and creative thinking, rescheduling the school year and more." It added: "Most of all, we urge that substantial financial support for schools seeking to redesign their entire learning environment, from the curriculum through the structure of the school to completely new instructional procedures."

Schools as they are currently set up, the forum observed, are simply "sorting machines, labeling and certifying those who presumably will be winners and losers as adults." It added: "The winners are disproportionately white and affluent. The losers, too often, are poor and brown or black or red."

Lack of reading ability may have some bearing on why there are so many losers, according to another forum. At this point in its history, it noted, the United States has achieved something close to universal school attendance, but by no means universal literacy. One out of four children today is encountering difficulty in mastering the essentials of reading, the forum report pointed out. It endorsed the Right To Read pro-

gram launched in September 1969 by former U.S. Comr. of Education James E. Allen. However, it recommended that the Right To Read effort needs to be "strengthened, coordinated and specifically funded on a scale commensurate with the job to be done." It noted that basic research on the subject of reading is scarce and fragmented. "We do not really understand reading or the teaching of reading," the forum said. "Teacher education is inadequate, both in quality and quantity. Home and community resources, potentially of great value in teaching literacy, are hardly used. Professional education has not yet begun to apply the principles of modern management to its task."

One of the most innovative ideas—a cultural voucher system which would give children aged 3 to 16 "as little as $5 a year" to barter with—came out of a forum on "Expressions of Identity." Chaired by Jeannine Schmid, an expert in Montessori education, the forum stressed the need for children to make choices and to judge the value of those choices. Defining culture as including everything from kite-flying to attending a violin recital, the report described the cultural voucher as "a separate paper currency system, restricted to the purchase of certain kinds of goods, services and experiences necessary to the development of a child's identity." Financed from federal tax revenues, the cultural voucher system would establish a cultural broker and cultural boards, which would oversee administration of the program, advise parents of existing cultural resources and stimulate new ones. The forum said it was not the amount of the voucher that was important, but rather that every child should have something to barter with. In some cases the voucher might be worth "as little as $5 annually," it noted.

Stephen Hess, chairman of the conference, described it as "an unqualified success." He said it produced "a body of work that can indeed provide a blueprint for American children in this decade." Many of the delegates, however, did not share this rosy view. Some felt the recommendations were much too general to stimulate specific action programs.

The conference on children and a companion White House Conference on Youth, held in the spring of 1971 in Colorado, were planned by a staff of 100 and cost $3.2 million.

The Informal School Arrives

Integrated day . . . free day . . . British infant school . . . Leicestershire Plan . . . free schools . . . open classrooms . . . the new education . . . informal education.

Whatever the name, a new movement is gaining a tenuous foothold in some of the nation's public and private schools. Unlike the post-Sputnik reaction of the late 1950s with its emphasis on basic education and the hard sciences—or the curriculum revision, learning systems and nongraded school plans of the 1960s—the new reform movement is calling for more than just a tinkering with the existing system.

The new approach advocates a fresh style and structure for schooling in the 1970s. The "free-open-informal" approach seeks to reshape and free the classroom from its rigidities; assign to the teacher a new role as the orchestrator or catalyst of learning, rather than its dictator; and incorporate in the schools a new view of children and their development, based on the discoveries of prominent researchers of the learning process.

Although the new approach has been evolving in Britain for the last half century, in this country it has been largely a semi-underground phenomenon with comparatively few American educators aware of its existence. But, with the publication in 1970 of Charles E. Silberman's *Crisis in the Classroom,* the British approach has received its first national prominence.

The legitimacy and respectability given to the new approach by Silberman has lifted informal education from the educational underground of small, privately financed "free"

schools or occasionally daring public educators. Now, state education commissioners, leaders of teacher organizations and even politicians are declaring themselves proponents of the new reform movement.

Although informal education is generally thought of as an elementary school approach, ranging from "free choice" periods to completely revised classroom and school structures, some advocates, like Silberman, expand their definition to include junior and senior high school experiments such as "free form" programs, independent study and "schools without walls."

Silberman told the 1971 meeting of the American Education Research Assn. that several thousand U.S. schools are experimenting with the open classroom idea. So far, the most ambitious experiment in informal education is taking place in the state of North Dakota. With a minimum of public notice, a new education school at the state university has trained at least 10% of the state's veteran and new teachers in the informal approach during the last three years.

Schools using informal education also exist in New York—most notably in the "open corridor" program which Lillian Weber of the City College of New York began three years ago with five classrooms in a single Harlem elementary school, and which now exists in some 60 classrooms in six schools in Harlem and on New York City's West Side. There are other examples in Philadelphia; Tucson; Montpelier, Vt.; and in a Portland, Ore., high school.

With increasing public exposure, proponents of informal education have been girding themselves for the critical reaction. While some critics are quick to label the new approach as an exported British reprint of John Dewey's progressive education, or as a new license for permissiveness, the real conflict comes from another direction. Informal education is finding itself increasingly in conflict with the demand for accountability.

Advocates of the new approach say experience with it in Britain has shown that most students do master basic skills. But, informal education, its proponents insist, has more farsighted goals, such as developing a child's creativity, individuality and personality—all objectives that cannot be precisely measured and can be stultified in a system of accountability that places a premium on immediately measurable performance.

To a believer in informal education, schools can and should be noisy, free, joyous, creative, emotional, human, hard to manage, unregimented and unrepressive places. Behind the free-wheeling and seemingly chaotic style, a serious approach to informal education must also have a structure and a well defined role for the teacher.

Although today's informal education movement shares many of John Dewey's assumptions about learning and could not exist without him, the new movement cannot be dismissed merely as a neo-progressivism. Of a more immediate and direct influence, however, are the British infant schools, first popularized to any degree in this country by Joseph Featherstone in *New Republic* magazine in the fall of 1967.

The British schools and America's free, informal, open schools consciously or instinctively incorporate the central ideas of Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget. He maintains that children are the chief agents of their own development which proceeds through a series of common stages that have only a rough relationship to a child's chronological age. From infancy to about age 11, Piaget outlines successive stages of development. The infant discovers objects, distance and the movement of things. The preschooler enters a concrete symbolic phase when he can classify, note similarities and differences and add and subtract. Not until the child is about 11 can he begin to handle truly abstract thought processes and enter the intellectual range of maturity. At each stage Piaget says the child is learning essentially through the use of his senses. He learns constantly by experimenting and experiencing his environment and assimilating what he learns.

Translated into classroom practice, what this means, for example, in the teaching of mathematics—or more properly, the experiencing of numbers—is that children should be given objects like blocks, counters, scales, balances, measuring devices and cuisenaire rods. With such tools the child learns numbers and fractions and the process of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. But more importantly the child also grasps the principles behind the symbols and the operations.

In teaching reading and the so-called language arts, the starting point in an informal classroom is conversation. Conversation leads to writing the alphabet and to the teacher's writing

down of stories and sentences dictated by the child. Eventually, the child can connect the spoken language and the symbols of the written language. An informal classroom uses no strict method for teaching reading: letter, word, phonics cards; books of all kinds; and constant speaking, writing and individual help all aid in breaking the code of letters. To facilitate this type of learning style, informal classrooms have discarded individual student desks, set lessons for the whole class, bells and class periods.

Edward Yeomans, writing for the National Assn. of Independent Schools after a visit to Leicestershire County Schools, gave what he calls a "panoramic photograph" of an infant school:

- "Forty to forty-five children, aged 5-7, attached to the room, but not necessarily in it, with one teacher.
- "Focal points, consisting of tables, chairs, bookshelves, bins, lockers, pegboards . . . all placed around the walls or in the middle of the room, or out on the terrace.
- "Two girls in the 'Wendy House' (a child-sized playhouse), dressed in Victorian costumes, serving 'tea.'
- "A green-grocer's store in which a 7-year-old and his 5-year-old helper are selling stage fruits, for stage money, to a line of customers, being particular about the change.
- "A small child reading alone in a nook partitioned off from the outer bustle by screens that double as bookshelves.
- "Two boys and a girl sawing and sandpapering wood on the carpenter's bench on the terrace; three others painting at easels on the terrace; an animal lover feeding the hamster.
- "A group of six at tables in the center of the room with the teacher, working with attribute blocks and plastic and wooden shapes which, when combined correctly, make geometric patterns in either two or three dimensions. . . ."

"This does not account for all 45, for the others were out of the room engaged in various projects. Teaching was taking place, but in unorthodox ways. The teacher had an eye for everything and everyone, but the children typically sought her aid on problems that were occupying them."

Descriptions of informal classrooms are necessarily different since the informal approach is not a doctrine or a set plan and no two classes are identical. Informal classes, however, do

share some common traits, besides the physical layout and the profusion of equipment. These include: a high noise level, happy children, exceedingly busy teachers and assistants and truly individualized learning.

Of crucial importance to an informal education approach is the teacher's conception of his role and the manner in which he handles the issue of "free choice." The best teachers develop their own styles, knowing when to intervene and when to hold back, based on their insights into the learning mode of the individual child. Free choice is invariably the issue most teachers agonize over in an informal setting. However, few informal schools operate under an absolute free choice system, allowing children to decide what they want to learn and even whether they want to learn.

Critics are quick to dismiss informal education as another of the latest fads that will be adopted by a minority of schools and make overall only a marginal impact on American education. Informal educators respect that criticism. They fear that school boards will jump on the bandwagon, mandating informal or open classes without providing for the workshops and demonstration classes teachers need to make the transition. They are wary of equipment and learning system companies rushing in with complete informal classroom packages that presuppose a change in equipment—without a drastic change in how a teacher views her role and relationship to children.

Perhaps the most serious problem of all for the teacher attempting to develop an informal or open classroom is the crisis of self-confidence. Herbert R. Kohl has provided the best description of that problem:

"It is almost certain that open classrooms will not develop within our school systems without the teachers and pupils experiencing fear, depression and panic. There will always be the fear that one is wrong in letting people choose their own lives instead of legislating their roles in society. There will be depression, for one can never know in the short range if one is succeeding in opening up possibilities to people or merely deceiving and seducing them. And there will be panic because we all fear chaos—fear that things have gotten so far out of hand in our lives that if we face the truth we will no longer be able to tolerate life."

Schools Open Up To Community

"The walls literally are coming down inside the school just as the walls are opening up to the community around the school." This statement from school architecture's most eloquent spokesman, Harold B. Gores, president, Educational Facilities Laboratories (EFL), aptly describes the two major trends in school architecture: open planning and community schools.

Open planning, once an oddity reserved for wildly innovative schools, is becoming almost commonplace. The 1971 Architectural Exhibition Jury of the American Assn. of School Administrators found open planning to be "very much in evidence" in new school plans at all grade levels. Only the high schools seem to be lagging a bit because the high school curriculum does not lend itself to open planning as easily as the lower grades.

Even older schools are being transformed into modern open learning areas as educators discover that tearing down classroom walls may not be as expensive as they may have thought. For example, Cherry Creek School District in Colorado converted an elementary school's 12 classrooms into four learning areas at a cost of $31,000. The move created enough "academic space" for another 150 children whereas constructing classrooms for 100 more children would have cost $100,000, says Supt. Edward C. Pino.

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Gores describes open planning as "zones of space" in which "teachers, students and curriculum can cut their own pathway." As such, open planning, with its flexibility, is being sought as a constant companion for individualized instruction. School architecture authorities feel that open planning can only become more essential as more emphasis is placed on the learner and on individualized and goal-oriented instruction. They reject the notion that open planning is a passing fad.

That's not to say that open planning is not without its problems. Architects point out that these schools must be planned carefully according to educational specifications or they may end up as huge, unwieldy lofts of space. Teachers must be trained on how to use the space. Architects have been dismayed to find teachers partitioning off newly provided open space and using it in the same way as the old egg crate schools. Others have found that sometimes the spaces are too large or too many students are placed in the same area. Acoustics is also a problem, but it can be dealt with by placing acoustical materials on the floors, ceilings and walls. Gores notes that carpeting and air conditioning in schools have finally been accepted and can be used without creating a stir.

The second major trend is the creation of community schools. Gores calls them "schools for the people rather than schools for children only." The idea is to have students and adults using the schools day and night. This means including not only a recreation complex for adults, but possibly, health facilities, a day care center, a restaurant or a joint community-school library or theater.

One of the best examples of the community school is a combination elementary school and human resource center in Pontiac, Mich., scheduled to open in the fall of 1971. The facility not only will serve about 1,800 students but also will include "a whole galaxy of people-serving functions," says Pontiac Supt. Dana P. Whitmer. "Some are welfare functions, health functions or counseling functions," Whitmer says. "Both private and public agencies will work through the human resources center with the community and will coordinate their efforts among each other and also with the schools."

Another unusual facet of the Pontiac complex: it's the first school to receive construction funds from the U.S. Dept. of

Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Under its Neighborhood Facilities Act, HUD agreed to fund the parts of the complex designed specifically for community use and to provide partial support for facilities that would be shared with the school district. HUD is providing $1.2 million toward the total $6.2 million price tag. The HUD-supported facilities included a theater, preschool, kindergarten, gymnasium, vocational education area, home economics rooms, meeting rooms and adult education spaces.

An even larger community complex will be joined with Dunbar High School in Baltimore. Scheduled to open in 1973, the new $11.5 million complex will provide the community with a library, health clinic, neighborhood city hall, arts center, swimming pools, job clinic, bookstore, cafeteria and child care center.

Other cities in the country have already built schools with smaller community complexes and more are considering it. EFL has suggested that other schools might want to look to HUD for money and that other federal agencies could also be a source of funds for such projects as day care, health, geriatric or job training facilities. EFL says the possibilities for joint funding "are limited only by the vision of the people and agencies involved."

If the community is going to use the schools, or even if just its children are, the community ought to be involved in planning it. This idea has given rise to a new method for planning schools—the charette. A charette, an intensive town meeting type of assembly such as that used in planning Baltimore's Dunbar complex, brings together everyone concerned in an often heated, marathon session to pinpoint a problem and look for a solution.

The joint approach to school architecture has also created the "design team"—the educator, the architect-engineer and the manager of construction—who work together to plan a building. Because of this breakthrough, schools can now be designed with the educational program in mind and the architect can find out immediately what his great new idea is going to do to construction costs.

Another new approach to school architecture—designed to speed the process and cut costs—is fast track planning.

It involves overlapping the processes of planning and construction, starting one before another is finished. This approach makes it possible to begin construction of a school's shell before the final details for the interior have been worked out. Fast track planning is often combined with the systems approach to building—a systematic step-by-step process, organized around needs and objectives, and concentrating on speed and efficiency.

An outstanding example of fast track planning and the systems approach is the Schoolhouse Systems Project in six Florida counties. This project has completed 28 buildings or additions, valued at more than $30 million, in two years. One participant, the Broward County School District, built six schools worth $16 million. The district was able to move all but one of the schools from the commissioning of the architect to occupancy in only 13 months.

The other kind of systems approach which can cut costs and speed construction is building systems—large manufactured components ready to be assembled rapidly, as opposed to what Alan C. Green, secretary-treasurer of EFL, calls "on-site handcrafting of little pieces." Preassembled components may include not only roofs and walls, but electrical and plumbing systems. So far, more than 200 schools have been either built or designed for this kind of component construction.

School architecture is moving in other directions, too. One example is the "conversion" of unused department stores, warehouses, garages or supermarkets into schools which can be reconverted to businesses if the neighborhood changes again. EFL has another project which is trying to create "New Life for Old Schools" through clever renovations.

School architecture has also been affected by the cry for a better environment. Architects are not only trying to use the whole outdoors as an educational arena, but they are also trying to relate the school to the community and to the land, disturbing the existing site as little as possible. Planners are creating innovative, and often artistic, playgrounds to replace the asphalt slab and the chain-link fence.

The future may hold some even bolder developments in school buildings. Gores predicts that inexpensive plastic ice may be coming soon, enabling children and their parents to come to school and skate together. The future may also see the use

of air-inflated furniture and semi-air-supported structures. These inflated vinyl "bubbles" are already covering many swimming pools, greenhouses, playing fields and other recreational areas. Ben E. Graves, director of the "New Life for Old Schools" project, foresees using "bubbles" to create "vest pocket schools" by "recapturing the lost space between buildings." "The new membranes and fibers now being developed, especially as a by-product of the aerospace program, will make it possible to roof over many of our large cavities of space—especially gymnasiums, field houses and stadiums," Gores says. For example, Antioch College is planning to cover its entire one-acre campus at Columbia, Md., with a "bubble." California's La Verne College is planning to enclose five and a half acres as a general student center. Princeton U. is considering a "bubble" dormitory.

Gores also sees the federal government coming up with more money for school construction—and he may be right. U.S. Comr. of Education Sidney P. Marland hinted at an increase when he noted that support for school building construction is less controversial than other kinds of categorical aid. His comments were made as part of eight regional workshops on educational facilities cosponsored by EFL, U.S. Office of Education, American Assn. of School Administrators, Council of Educational Facility Planners and American Institute of Architects.

Gores also believes that the big aircraft manufacturers may suddenly become interested in the schoolhouse as defense contracts falter. As Gores looks to the future, he has another big hope: that schools will not only be designed for enlightenment, but for warmth. "Education has the lamp of knowledge as its symbol," Gores says, but he finds schools to be "cold, clammy, formica institutions." His plea, "Help us defrost these chilly places."

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PPBS:
Gobbledygook or Panacea?

What is PPBS?

The answer to this question has been bothering many educators during the past year because they think it may solve some of their problems. But often they really don't know what it is—and most explanations of PPBS tend to make the subject even more mystical and foggy.

PPBS—Planning, Programming, Budgeting System—is a suggested answer to many of education's most serious ills: how to cope with the growing bureaucracy of schools, how to avoid increasing restlessness of students and militancy of teachers and how to counter the loss of citizen support of schools. And some highly respected educators believe it just might work.

There's been a lot of talk about PPBS in the last few years, but little action. Its popularity, however, is growing and the fact that it hasn't been rejected is considered most significant.

PPBS got its big boost in the early 1960s when it was implemented in the U.S. Dept. of Defense by Robert S. McNamara. Since that time, many factors have made its entry into the management of school districts inevitable. In the last decade, schools and educators have become more and more interested

in how students learn—hence, the growth of such concepts as team teaching, modular scheduling, bookless curricula and independent study. The growth of technology, too, has given impetus to the search for new strategies. Video and audio tape recordings, programmed learning and even the computer have all become popular media in the instructional programs of many public schools. And the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 also stressed the need for different ways to learn and for evaluating the ways which worked best with specific kinds of students. But most important in setting the stage for PPBS's entry into education has been the inflationary spiral of the early 1970s. Because money is tight, citizens and parents today are asking not only what their tax dollars are buying but also whether the programs are worthwhile.

Nearly 20 states in the nation have now mandated some type of program budgeting—and many others are moving in that direction. To help districts implement PPBS, the Research Corp. of the Assn. of School Business Officials of the United States and Canada (ASBO) in the summer of 1971 concluded a three-year contract with the U.S. Office of Education to develop a model for PPBS. The Dade County, Fla., school system is cooperating with ASBO in the development of an operational design. The purpose of the project is to encourage school systems across the country to investigate and use the conceptual design developed, says William H. Curtis, ASBO's research project director and former president of the American Assn. of School Administrators. The end result, he says, will not be a packaged program applicable to all districts, but it will be a model for guidance. Curtis believes that it takes 5 to 10 years to implement PPBS.

Unlike many other approaches for solving today's educational problems, PPBS gets to both causes and effects and encompasses the entire school system. Therefore, the decision to adopt PPBS is a commitment to change. It requires implementing an entire concept which includes asking (1) what it is educators want to achieve, (2) how they propose to attain it and (3) whether or not they achieved it.

Adoption of PPBS does not happen quickly, Curtis says. Because it is so encompassing, PPBS can only be implemented on a step-by-step basis. Before any progress toward implementing

PPBS can be realized, inservice training for all levels of staff should be undertaken. In fact, it is absolutely necessary to have everyone on the staff participate in its development.

PPBS is not just another budgeting procedure, its proponents point out. The concept requires extensive planning and programming before budgeting is even approached, Curtis advises. The first element in PPBS is planning. Because planning is the basis on which subsequent elements depend, it has to be extensive and thorough. This is the rough spot: Where do we start? How do we start? Specific answers depend upon the local school district's goals and objectives. These spell out what the schools want to accomplish in light of student and community needs. Involvement of people in this process seems to be the most valid approach to writing meaningful goals and objectives. Students, parents, community leaders, teachers and administrators all have a vital part in the planning. The special commitment of PPBS to communication and to involving people in the planning and programming has implications for the future. The citizen is not only in a much better position to understand what his dollars are buying, but he can participate in the setting of educational priorities, Curtis says. Because of this involvement, citizens are very likely to regain confidence in their schools.

Programming is another element of PPBS. Simply, this phase consists of identifying the strategy which will be used to achieve the district's goals and objectives. Just how broad or narrow the programs are depends on the needs of the local school system. Generally, the larger the school system the greater the need to identify more programs and subprograms. The goals and objectives must also be carefully delineated. Typically, they are stated in behavioral terms capable of being measured for later evaluation.

After the goal-setting and priority-ordering phases of PPBS, it is necessary to establish an accounting system to "cost out" each program. Then, what's likely to happen in many instances after dollars are attached to programs is a reallocation of budget amounts which are more in line with district goals and objectives. A reevaluation of this sort may affect the district's immediate and long-range goals, depending on the district's financial resources.

The three phases of PPBS—planning, programming, budgeting—are implemented separately, but they are interdependent. Although goals and objectives are determined initially, they may have to be altered when programming establishes the approaches. And, alternatives may have to be investigated still further when the operating budget is determined. Once PPBS is fully implemented, however, goals, programs and budget should all be compatible, Curtis says. The notion of "system" ties them together in such a way that they interact with one another as a result of change based on evaluation and available resources.

Evaluation is considered an essential ingredient of PPBS. As a matter of fact, the entire system comes full circle with evaluation. The basic elements in PPBS are meaningful only if the district's goals and objectives are met, or indeed if they are realistic in view of available resources.

John Bristol, a systems specialist and assistant superintendent for the Niles Township High School District in suburban Chicago, believes PPBS will be adopted by every school system in the country in 10 years.

Typically, management systems consist of input, processing and output. Bristol points out, however, that many educational organizations emphasize input to the exclusion of processing and output. Not knowing the process of how input is used, he says, is known as the "black box" theory. PPBS opens that black box for educators, Bristol believes, by allowing them to look at the process and to evaluate the output.

School districts are eyeing PPBS cautiously, but not many have adopted it. Some are hesitant and even reluctant to take the first step toward PPBS. The reasons are many. For some, the difficulty simply is change, or evaluation and arrangement of goals and objectives by priority. For others, it's too big an order to justify its adoption. And, many educators don't readily identify with the notion of behavioral scientists that all output can be measured by quantity. They see many of their goals as ones of attitude, thus immeasurable. As already noted, schools have always emphasized input—more teachers, more books, more materials—and their organization is set up typically to handle input. PPBS's interest in process and output as well as input represents a big change in approach.

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One state which has taken the leadership to help its public schools make the transition to PPBS is California. Its state legislature in 1967 created an Advisory Commission in School District Budgeting and Accounting to develop a PPBS model. The commission hopes to have the system implemented statewide by July 1973. More recently, the California State Board of Education in late 1970 voted to have the staff of the department of education proceed toward the adoption of the proposed program structure for budgeting, accounting and reporting purposes. Fifteen school districts in California are developing pilot projects in PPBS to demonstrate the concept's effectiveness.

Despite a number of apparent headaches in implementing PPBS, its appearance on the thresholds of American schools makes considerable sense to many people. With its adoption, proponents say, schools no longer have to accept what they're doing as good merely because they've always done it that way. They can evaluate their programs in view of the needs they are trying to serve and then choose what's best for students and community in terms of time, effort and money.

Polls Disclose Insights For Educators

Educational issues and attitudes—of both adults and young people—have become a happy hunting ground for the pollsters in recent months.

The reasons are obvious: Education is costing more money and directly involving more people than ever before. Campus disruption and teacher strikes frequently have put colleges and public schools on page one. A national issue—racial integration—has involved the schools more than any other single institution.

What do people think about these problems? The question, with all its endless possibilities, was bound to command the attention of the poll-takers sooner or later. And the answers are bound to influence the decision-making process in education at just about every level.

The answers have never been so numerous. CFK, Ltd., of Denver, commissioned Gallup International to conduct the first national survey of what the American people think about their schools. Here's what it found: Many people feel there is not enough discipline in the schools. Forty-nine per cent told Gallup discipline isn't strict enough; 44% said it's just about right. Three times as many people approved of what their school boards were doing as disapproved. Nearly half thought teacher salaries were about right while one-third thought they were too low.

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They were about evenly divided on automatic raises for teachers and the right of teachers to join unions, but a sizable majority (59% to 37%) opposed giving teachers the right to strike. And a surprisingly high proportion (75% nationally) said they would like to see their children pursue teaching careers. What are the opinions of college students, over and beyond their general approval of the kind of education they are getting? The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education came up with some interesting findings:

Although generally approving, most undergraduates (91%) think their education could be improved by making it more suitable to contemporary life. A substantial majority of faculty (71%) think likewise.

Slight undergraduate majorities want grades abolished (59%) and all courses made elective (54%). Faculty percentages in agreement on these questions are predictably lower—32% and 20% respectively. Twenty-one per cent of the undergraduates want voting power on faculty appointments and promotions. Not surprisingly, only 5% of the faculty agree.

Nearly three-fourths of both undergraduates and professors concur that there can be no justification for using violence to achieve political goals in the United States. And the emergence of radical student activity in recent years has the unqualified approval of only 3% of both professors and graduate students. But 39% of the faculty and 33% of the graduate students approve of it with reservations. (A related and generally substantiating conclusion was reached in an early 1971 Gallup poll of how college students placed themselves in the political spectrum. Only 7% saw themselves as being of the "radical left." Thirty per cent said "left," 41% "middle," 15% "right," 2% "far right.")

Gilbert Youth Research conducted a poll for the White House Conference on Children and Youth. Inevitably much of its inquiry dealt with drugs. Twelve per cent of the nation's young people, aged 14-25, Gilbert found, are—or were as of late 1970—using drugs regularly. Twenty-six per cent had tried marijuana or other drugs at least once. Drug use was least prevalent (22%) among Southern youth, most prevalent in the Northeast (34%). The majority of youth (54%) said they would not report a known drug pusher. This was particularly

true of high school students (66%) and college students (62%). Other polls reported somewhat less alarming figures on drug usage. One conducted by the Merit Publishing Co. found that 10% of 22,000 student leaders had tried marijuana. And the *Milwaukee Journal* put the figure at less than 20% of the young people aged 16 to 21 based on its poll in the Milwaukee area.

When asked what they want most to do in life, 47% of those polled by Gilbert said bluntly, "make money." Whom do they admire most? Friends, parents and teachers, in that order. (Teachers rated only a 3% vote among 500 10- to 12-year-olds in New England, the Midwest and the "marginal" South. Yet paradoxically the career most often chosen by both young men and women was teaching.)

Premarital sex won approval of 35% of the 16- to 21-year-olds polled by the *Milwaukee Journal*. Thirty-eight per cent disapproved and 24% were uncertain. One student's comment on the *Journal* questionnaire summed up fairly well the agonizing ambivalence of the young on this issue: "Morally I disapprove. Physically I approve."

Regularly the poll-takers recheck the nation's feelings about race and school integration. The trend, from the standpoint of blacks and liberals who champion integration, is unmistakably heartening. In 1963, 61% of Southern white parents said they would object if their children attended schools "where a few are Negroes." By 1970 that figure had dropped to 16%. Even the percentage of Southern parents who object to having their children in schools "where more than half are Negroes" declined during the seven-year period from 86% to 69%. (For that matter, 51% of Northern white parents were still objecting in 1970.)

By way of summing up, a Harris survey in early 1971 found that 55% of the country approved the U.S. Supreme Court decision to end school segregation. A little less than a year earlier, the proportion was 48%. But large majorities, according to Gallup, still are dead set against busing.

There is only one drawback to polls about education—especially those that deal with the general attitudes of the adult public toward schools. You have to take some of them with a grain of skepticism. Some of the pollsters, or their backers,

acknowledge this fact themselves. Louis Harris points out, for example, that education almost always shows up near the top of the list of national priorities cited by people whom the pollsters interview. But, says Harris, this may well result simply from the fact that two out of every three Americans feel a sense of inadequacy over their own education. They wish they had gone further in school.

Charles F. Kettering II, chairman of CFK, Ltd., which sponsored the Gallup poll, shares Harris' doubts. People may respond affirmatively to questions about schools because they think it's expected of them, said Kettering. Referring to part of the Gallup-CFK poll in which three-fourths of the parents said they wanted their children to become teachers, Kettering said: "The public might be 'programmed' to support the schools. In the absence of other clear-cut alternatives, (the people polled) have no real choice but to verbalize this support when asked this type of question."

These speculations may help to explain, then, why a citizenry seemingly so approving of education nevertheless votes down so many school bond issues and tax override proposals.

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Vouchers:
Reform or Catastrophe?

The American way says you can buy a Ford or a Chevy or a Honda and take your aches and pains to Dr. Jones, Dr. Johnson or Dr. Jekyll. But when it comes to education, the options disappear, the market closes down. Where a family lives determines the school its children will attend. The tax money allotted for a child's education is guaranteed a particular school no matter how well or poorly he learns there. Educational choices are available only to the affluent, or to those whose religion makes a parochial school available.

Until recently, no one questioned the assumptions underlying the operation of the public school—a monopoly that appeared to benefit the common good and to produce what it promised. Then came the grim realizations of the past decade: the seeming inability of that system to reform itself from within, to teach minimal literacy to poor children, to integrate the population by race or class, to provide the social mobility which America likes to boast about or even to maintain the respect of many bright students in the "best" public schools. The monopoly is now under attack, and plans for an experiment with an alternative structure—a voucher system—are under way.

The goal of a voucher system is to give all parents a direct say in the kind of schooling their children receive by giving them the economic power to select the school from a number of alternatives. Under a voucher plan, parents of all school-age children are provided with a voucher equal to their child's share of

the public school budget. This voucher is "payable" to any school which they select for their child to attend.

The thrust for a voucher system comes not only from growing public frustration with the failures of the public school system but also from a new sense that a single system and a single educational program cannot meet the needs of all children, no matter how successful it is with some. The public schools have probably never operated so efficiently as they do today, and yet they are being pressured by various forces in the society to provide a wide range of services and to cope with increasing diversity. Today's comprehensive high school, for instance, is expected to do well by students who want biology, band, black studies and a host of other offerings. Inevitably, say critics, the public school system as a whole comes up with a curriculum that in offering a smattering of everything can do few things very well. The voucher system, its advocates say, would change all that. No single school would be expected to educate all kinds of children or offer all kinds of learning.

The concept of a voucher system is not new. Since 1953, Milton Friedman, a conservative economist at the U. of Chicago, has been advocating the voucher idea as a means of making schools financially accountable in a competitive market. Voucher proponents point out that the highly successful GI Bill operated as a kind of voucher, with veterans buying higher education at the college of their choice.

By 1969 the House of Representatives' subcommittee on education heard testimony from "radical" education theorists such as Paul Goodman on the possible value of providing education funds directly to parents and students. At those hearings, Rep. Roman C. Pucinski, chairman of the subcommittee, noted that "we have one thing that we frequently totally ignore, and that is the parents and the child. Very often they may not be very sophisticated and may not be very scholarly . . . but they have a distinctive feeling for the progress of their children. Yet if the parent feels that this child is really not moving along . . . under our present system that parent has nothing more to do. . . . But give that parent economic power, give that parent the power to move his child into a school where he feels that child is going to get a better education and I think you have then given that parent something to really bargain with."

All of this might have been idle talk, however, except for a feasibility study of the voucher concept at the Center for the Study of Public Policy (CSPP) at Harvard U. Funded by two grants totalling $521,000 from the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and headed by Christopher Jencks, CSPP president, the project has produced two extensive reports which are optimistic about the possibilities of a carefully regulated voucher experiment. To learn where the project might be tried out, OEO has now awarded feasibility study grants of about $20,000 each to four school systems (Gary, Ind.; Seattle; San Francisco; and Alum Rock in San Jose, Calif.) which are considering adopting the plan for a five- to eight-year run.

Jencks believes that vouchers would provide real educational advantages, especially for the poor, in these ways:

- Individuals would not be required to accept standardized programs offered in assigned public schools.
- Parents would be able to assume a significant role in shaping their child's education.
- A range of choices in the schools would become available. Small new schools of all types could come into operation—Montessori, Summerhill, open classroom and traditional schools, among others.
- Administrators and teachers could arrange their curricula to appeal to a particular group or to reflect a particular school of thought on educational methods.
- Resources would be more accurately channeled directly to a target group—the poor.
- A form of accountability to parents would be introduced since parents could withdraw their children from the school if it did not perform in accordance with their desires.

Because the CSPP staff believes that an uncontrolled voucher plan would be disastrous, they have built in tight regulations to safeguard against the possible dangers inherent in a voucher operation: increased racial and economic segregation, the rise of "elite" schools and the violation of the constitutional separation of church and state. It would be the job of a local governing group to see that all voucher schools are open to all applicants, that they enroll a proportion of minority students at

least as large as the proportion of minority applicants, and that they accept the voucher as full payment for all educational services. As an incentive for schools to admit poor youngsters, the value of disadvantaged students' vouchers would be supplemented, up to double the standard voucher for the most needy youngsters. The model suggests that when a school is oversubscribed, at least half the applicants be selected by lottery. Parochial schools would only be allowed to accept vouchers if participation did not violate constitutional protections. And all participating schools would be required to abide by a single set of rules in the suspension and expulsion of students.

A key function of the governing agency and the voucher schools would be to fully inform parents of available schools so that they could make wise choices among these institutions.

As the project moves ahead with continued OEO support, the biggest hurdle it may face is strong resistance from the educational establishment. The National Education Assn. (NEA) opposes vouchers with this comment: They "could lead to racial, economic and social isolation of children and weaken or destroy the public school system," as well as introduce "hucksterism" into education. Other educational groups have reacted in less measured tones. The *New Jersey Education Association Review* called vouchers a Southern-style device to aid the growth of segregationist schools. The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) has published scare materials about vouchers which range from strident articles about "The Voucher Vultures" to a sarcastic comic book.

Opposition to vouchers goes beyond education groups. A number of national religious and interest groups joined the NEA and the AFT in a coalition to ask Congress to conduct hearings on the plan. The American Civil Liberties Union and the National Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People have come out against vouchers, seeing the plan basically as a threat to hard-won integration and church-state battles rather than as an aid to providing individuals with greater civil rights.

Public reaction to vouchers has not been tested. But recent surveys show that a majority of parents would opt out of public schools if they had the means, and the defeat of school tax levies has demonstrated citizen resistance to pouring more money into schools over whose policies they seem to have little control.

Student Revolt Cooling Off?

Some called it a mood of "eerie tranquility"; others said it wouldn't last. But it was clear this school year that students were hitting the books, not the barricades. The cooling trend was most evident on the college campus, but even the volatile high school scene had simmered down.

Observers speculated that the young were fed up with violence and confrontation, believing they could bring on harsher repressions; others felt the recession had infected collegians with real fears for their job futures. Most would agree, however, that the student movement of the past six years has shaken the educational establishment—and concessions won have helped defuse the turmoil.

The last two years, for example, have seen remarkable gains for high school students seeking more say in school policies. They are serving as nonvoting members of school boards in such places as Richland, Wash., Santa Barbara, Calif., and Monticello, N.Y.; acting as teen-age advisors to state boards of education in California, New Jersey and North Carolina; rapping regularly with school superintendents over restaurant lunches or cafeteria coffee in Huntsville, Ala., Tulsa, Okla., York, Pa.,

and Lansing, Mich.; and taking an active role in curriculum planning in many school districts.

Some systems, in fact, *pay* students to help revise the curriculum. For the past three years, 50 Buffalo, N.Y., public school students have worked along with 150 teachers for four weeks every summer, rewriting and updating curriculum guides. San Diego, Calif., and Atlanta, Ga., school districts also employ students to work on curriculum revision, believing their advice will result in more interesting and meaningful courses for fellow students.

In Pittsburgh, Pa., students help to select school textbooks; in Englewood, N.J., they have a part in screening administrative personnel for school jobs; in Wilmington, Del., they aid in the selection of paraprofessionals; and in Beverly Hills, Calif., they help screen prospective teachers.

The burgeoning popularity of the "minicourse" can also be traced to the persistent student push for more "relevancy" in school courses. A recent survey by the Educational Research Service of 16 high schools located around the country found hundreds of students involved in selecting, planning and sometimes teaching minicourses. Students at these schools showed the most interest in courses which included contemporary social problems, contemporary culture, community service programs and field trips.

Perhaps the most common device for listening to student concerns is the advisory council to the principal. However, the principal usually retains his veto power over student proposals. In at least one school—Ramapo Senior High School, Spring Valley, N.Y.—Principal Howard R. Jacobs says he's not the "boss," but simply one member of the Student-Faculty-Administration Council (SFAC), with one vote and no veto power. Any problem can be discussed and voted upon, and the majority rules. The only things that can set aside an SFAC decision, says Jacobs, are "state law and board of education policy." So far, the 14-member SFAC has decided on such matters as a restrictive pass system, new rules for conduct in the lounge, careless driving in the student parking lot and setting up a snack bar. But its sights are aimed at more controversial concerns, such as adult censorship of student publications, "freedom of the bulletin board," qualifications to join the school honor society,

excusing high-average seniors from final exams and whether the school should have a draft counselor.

Thus principals who are willing to abandon their former all-powerful role are learning to share more responsibility with students. But the second great push to broaden student rights has come from outside the schools, by way of the courts. Some 100 federal court decisions in the last three years, says Principal George Triezenberg of D. D. Eisenhower High School, Blue Island, Ill., have made it clear that the principal aiming to run a tight ship had better be sure he doesn't trample any constitutional rights.

Too many principals, says Triezenberg, have ended up "wearing a dunce cap" in court because they have failed to learn that (1) schools are no longer regarded as sacred cows by the courts; (2) disciplinary action must meet the test of due process; (3) accountability of school personnel in dealing with discipline problems is no longer limited only to one's professional superiors; (4) the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment are a legacy of juveniles; (5) education, especially through the secondary level, is a guaranteed right, no longer a privilege; and (6) the school's protective armor of "in loco parentis" as a rationale in discipline matters has been torn away.

Robert L. Ackerly, a Washington, D.C., attorney, thinks some principals are living dangerously. He notes that the courts have said flatly that students must be treated as adults and their right to dress as they please is protected by the First Amendment. Ackerly says he finds it difficult to understand how schools can teach students respect and almost reverence for the Constitution while "at the same time they ignore basic constitutional principles in day-to-day dealings with the students."

Students have won another battle in some courts with several rulings stating that principals cannot require prepublication review of newspapers or other materials to be circulated through the schools. But other court rulings have taken exactly the opposite position.

Nor can the principal issue a blanket prohibition against so-called "underground papers" or other non-school publications unless they "interfere with orderly conduct of classes and schoolwork."

Emory U.'s Edward T. Ladd admits that problems with

the high school newspaper can put the principal out on a limb. Under present arrangements, school officials are personally accountable, politically and legally, for what students publish, including anything libelous and obscene, not to mention controversial.

Ladd advises high schools to follow the example of colleges which are increasingly cutting the apron strings to the campus paper. Big Ten universities which have recently incorporated their dailies as nonprofit corporations, independent of the university, include Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and Purdue. The growing political activism of these papers posed a serious threat to the tax-exempt status of the parent institutions, and they were glad to let them go. The incorporation makes the student editors, not the trustees or university administration, responsible for their contents.

Ladd thinks school districts could enter into contracts with student groups, subsidizing the student press in return for free space in the paper or a specified number of copies of each issue. By means of contracts, he says, school districts could give the students money to retain independent legal counsel to advise them on such legal dangers as libel and obscenity. The district, says Ladd, also should require the independent publication to make it abundantly clear that it is not an official publication of the school district.

Judicial decisions affirming that education is a right and that students may not be deprived of it through suspension or expulsion without reasonable notice and opportunity for a "fair hearing" have led many prudent school administrators to set up proper machinery to handle grievances. At Marshall-University High School in Minneapolis, for example, the suspension of a student may be appealed to the administration by him or his parents, or, if the appeal is not solved there, by a request made in writing to convene a Suspension Review Panel. The panel must be convened within two days after filing of the request. The plaintiff may be represented by an advocate chosen by his parents. The proceedings are confidential; only a written statement of the panel's decision may be made public. If the student is still not satisfied with the decision, an appeal may be made to the district's Joint Policy Board.

To those principals who see nothing but disciplinary chaos

ahead if their hands are tied by such curbs. Principal Triezenberg maintains that the courts are not denying to schools the power to suspend for disruptive or incorrigible behavior—"they are simply requiring evidence of step-by-step due process." Somewhat the same rationale has surfaced in the few court cases so far concerning the principal's right to search student lockers. The indications are that he may do so, because a student's locker or desk is school property, but the search must be "exercised with extreme care, reasonableness and in the spirit of due process."

Professor Ladd believes court cases revolving around students' substantive constitutional rights—free speech, equal protection—will diminish. But he predicts more and more challenges centering on alleged denials of due process. And, he says, judges are arriving at decisions on due process on the basis of "their own intuitions" about education, as modified or supported by the arguments of whoever happens to be the party in the given case.

"Judges are getting hardly any help from the organized educational profession and the academic students of education," he says, and yet, the issue of due process in school systems is an educational issue. It is the educational experts who should say what requirements must or must not be placed on youngsters to advance their education, says Ladd. And educators should be devising procedures "that will give the kids and the courts the feeling that we are scrupulously fair about the way we use the authority we have been given."

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